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Agenda item 8

DRAFT REPORT

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Addendum

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999 (item 4 (a))

Section 3. Peacekeeping operations and special missions

1. At its 11th and 12th meetings, on 17 and 18 June 1997, the Committee considered section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

Discussion

2. Delegations reaffirmed that the maintenance of international peace and security was one of the highest priorities of the Organization, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. Those delegations supported the activities of peacekeeping operations and special missions since they help to achieve the maintenance of peace. Some delegations reaffirmed that preventive diplomacy should be pursued before peacekeeping operations were launched and that coordination between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other relevant departments in the conduct of peacekeeping operations was critical and should be of prime importance. Other delegations stressed that activities related to peacekeeping operations should not be at the expense of developmental activities of the Organization.

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3. Some delegations welcomed the details in the presentation of activities and resource requirements in the section and indicated that the complexity of the activities was reflected in the fascicle. Many delegations felt that the proposals under the Department of Peacekeeping Operations did not reflect the total resources required by the Department. The same delegations felt that the resources requested for the Department were insufficient and that it could not rely on continued provisions outside the regular budget. Other delegations pointed to the imbalance of staff funded from the regular budget, the support account for peacekeeping operations and those provided by Governments on a non-reimbursable basis. Some delegations stressed that the Department should have sufficient means to carry out its tasks and noted with regret the proposed decrease in regular budget posts related to the United Nations Supply Depot at Pisa. Some delegations sought clarification regarding the modalities for financing the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and for the transfer of the activities of the Depot at Pisa to the Brindisi Base. Some delegations felt that the decrease in posts was inconsistent with the importance attached to the maintenance of peace and security. One delegation noted with gratitude that the Department would work with field missions, while a few delegations stressed the importance of the activities of the Lessons Learned Unit.

4. Some delegations expressed concern at the continuing financial crisis, which, inter alia, had affected reimbursements to countries providing troops and contingent-owned equipment. In that context, the same delegations felt that effective planning, appropriate budgeting and administrative arrangements for peacekeeping operations were necessary. Some delegations drew attention to the expeditious settlement of death and disability benefits.

5. In connection with the resources requested for consultancy services required to undertake a study to draw lessons from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed forces programmes carried out by past and ongoing peacekeeping missions, one delegation expressed the view that efforts should be made to use expertise already available within the Organization, in particular in the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research or in the context of the analysis of the results of disarmament programmes, the activities of which are reflected under section 2, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

6. With regard to gratis personnel, a number of delegations felt that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be able to carry out its programme of work without the need to resort to gratis personnel. Some delegations expressed concern at the preponderance of gratis personnel in the Department on the one hand, and, on the other, the unwillingness of some Member States to provide resources to carry out the activities of the programme in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and to recruit staff in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules. The same delegations felt that the provision of gratis personnel would jeopardize execution of the mandated activities. Furthermore, the arrangement was ad hoc and consequently unpredictable and unreliable. Those delegations stressed that the Secretary-General should have included in his post requirements for the Department all the posts he deems necessary to carry out the functions needed for the implementation of its programme of work and yet currently conducted by gratis personnel. They requested that the results of the internal review of the resources required for

the Department conducted by the Secretariat and described to the Committee be presented to Member States for their consideration. Other delegations expressed appreciation for the valuable contribution made by gratis personnel to the work of the Organization.

7. Many delegations reiterated that this situation should not by any means be interpreted as a standard practice that would absolve Member States from meeting their responsibilities under the Charter or from reaffirming the principle that Member States collectively should provide all resources necessary for the implementation of mandated programmes and activities by staff recruited in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules pursuant to Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter.

8. Some delegations noted with concern the post reductions proposed for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and peacekeeping operations in general and felt that those reductions might have a negative impact on the work programme of those peacekeeping missions. Some delegations queried the need for so many civilian support staff when the majority of the UNTSO observers were attached to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). One delegation expressed concern at the reinforcement of other peacekeeping operations by creating new posts without specifying the legislative mandate for doing so. Another delegation supported the proposal as regards the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). Some delegations recalled the expressed wish of the General Assembly for the streamlining of UNTSO after consultation with the parties concerned.

9. Some delegations regretted that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 did not provide for resources for special missions related to good offices and preventive diplomacy. Those delegations felt that the Secretary-General should have included financial provision in the proposed programme budget for unforeseen ad hoc missions, at a level commensurate with the requirements for such missions in the recent past. The absence of those resources did not create a potential for the Organization to respond and to react in areas of potential conflict. The same delegations were of the view that special missions were integral in achieving the aim of the Organization in promoting peace and security and that the decrease proposed would affect the capability of the Organization to promote peace and security. One delegation suggested that an operational reserve should be set aside for these activities.

10. A number of delegations expressed concern that provisions for the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) did not cover the entire biennium 1998-1999. Those delegations recalled the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in that connection and fully agreed with the expectation of the Advisory Committee that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 would include provisions for the financing of the Mission for a full biennium, bearing in mind that the Mission was likely to continue until the year 2000. The same delegations felt that when resources would be required, adequate resources might not be made available to the Mission in a timely manner. Another delegation felt that sufficient mandate existed for the Secretary-General to request resources related to the activities of MINUGUA beyond the end of its current mandate.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, subject to the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 3.10 should read:

"The Department must maintain a capacity to discharge effectively those tasks assigned to it, as mandated in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and taking into account the important contribution that regional arrangements and agencies, within their respective mandates, scope and composition, can make to peacekeeping, in accordance with chapter VIII of the Charter";

(b) As to paragraph 3.19, the Committee recommended that the Secretariat first utilize existing studies, especially those published by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, before requesting new studies to be conducted within the United Nations system, and use specialized consultancy services, if necessary, as a last resort. The Committee also recommended that, in paragraph 3.19 (b), the words "reintegration of armed forces" be deleted.

12. The Committee also recommended ensuring congruity among mandates, resources and objectives in implementing peacekeeping mandates. The peacekeeping function should be effectively and efficiently managed throughout the United Nations by appropriate measures, including accountability and responsibility.

13. In connection with MINUGUA, bearing in mind that the Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreement was a detailed guide for the implementation from 1997 to the end of 2000, and that the Mission would be likely to continue until the end of 2000, the Committee noted that, in accordance with United Nations Regulations and Rules and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programming Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Methods of Evaluation, resources for the full biennium 1998-1999 for the financing of the Mission were not included under the section.

14. The Committee noted that the issue of gratis personnel was under active consideration by the General Assembly and drew the attention of the Assembly to the need to review staffing issues for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in their entirety.